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# IT-related energy consumption doubles

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[Index](#)

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The amount of electricity consumed by computer servers has doubled in five years and will increase another 75 per cent by 2010, according to a report published on Thursday by an energy efficiency expert.


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Jonathan Koomey, a consulting professor at Stanford University and scientist at America's Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, says the world's servers and their cooling infrastructure consumed as much power as that put out by 14 1,000-megawatt power stations in 2005.

The total server electricity bill was about \$7.3bn, of which the US made up \$2.7bn.

Prof Koomey said servers and associated equipment represented about 1.2 per cent of US electricity consumption in 2005, comparable to the amount consumed by televisions.

His study, sponsored by the microprocessor maker Advanced Micro Devices, will be used in a call to action addressed to boards of companies that leave spending on servers to their IT departments.

Internet and technology companies have woken up to the fact that the cost of equipment is often exceeded by that of the electricity needed to run it during its lifetime but this has yet to be properly recognised by non-technology companies.

"At the moment, the IT budget of these companies is separate and IT departments don't have any incentive to be more efficient, because the utility bills do not come out of their budget," Prof Koomey said.

Companies would wake up to the costs their data centres incurred only when "everybody is in the room and responsibility was taken at board level, he said.

Manufacturers of servers and their components have become energy-conscious. Intel, the biggest chipmaker, has set a new benchmark of performance-per-watt rather than chasing higher processor speeds, which burn far more energy.

Prof Koomey said there were inefficiencies throughout processes in data centres and different companies were looking at how to make disk drives, power supplies and cooling systems use less power.

But this was not being driven by a desire to be more environment-friendly, he said.

"It's mainly driven by business and IT constraints – they only have a certain amount of power in their buildings and they can't keep on putting in more of these [energy-inefficient] servers," he said.

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His study compared energy usage from 2000 to 2005 and predicted usage in 2010.

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